

FALLING 2,600 FEET FROM A BALLOON.



To fall twenty-six feet is almost certain death to a human being, but a woman aeronaut fell 2,600 feet at St. Louis a few days ago from a balloon that swayed but a speck among the clouds.

A WOMAN'S mind that deadly fear makes apparent. Victoria Le Roy had made 200 ascensions for the delight of those who love to see people in peril. Once before she had fallen and received severe injuries. Daily contact with danger makes one careless of fate, however, and so there was no thought of tragedy when, clinging to the trap-

DIZZY bar, Mrs. Le Roy shot up into space at this, her last ascension. A moment later, when the balloon was sixty feet above the earth, it suddenly swayed, there was a jerk of the parachute rope, and then the parachute itself fell toward the earth, opening just as it reached the ground.

PLUNGE The onlookers saw for an instant a white, terror-stricken face looking down at them. Then the balloon darted toward the clouds at railroad speed. During the seconds that had elapsed since the parachute fell the woman vainly tugged to release her arm from the iron ring through which it was thrust. Before she succeeded she was 200 feet from the earth.

FROM THE THE woman's first intention to trust to chance and drop before the balloon reached a greater height was then abandoned. She swung slightly to one side of the trapeze bar, clinging to it with her left hand. A second later she threw her right arm across the

SKY bar and grasped her left wrist with her right hand. For a moment or two she clung to the bar in this fashion, while the dainty handkerchief she had waved at the spectators just before the ascension drifted down through the air and fell softly to the ground, amidst the

DOWN feet of her pallid husband, who had followed the course of the balloon as well as he could. By this time the balloon, rising higher and higher, had reached a point directly over a branch of the Des Peres River, about 600 feet from the place of ascension. The woman's endurance now failed her. Whether she fainted or not will ever know. So great was the height of the balloon that the spectators did not realize what it meant when something was seen to fall like an arrow from the inflated monster.

TO HER Presently the outline of a human form was visible. Then the woman's body turned a series of somersaults, first from side to side, then over and over, until with a crash it landed in the top of a tall elm, then down through the branches of the tree, until it fell a mangled heap on the earth below.

DEATH. The crowd that had watched it all found her there, crushed and torn almost beyond semblance of humanity. And all this happened in exactly four minutes.

Scientific Explanation of Dime Museum Freaks.

Dr. Maguire, the Eminent Skin Expert, Tells How Missing Links, Bearded Ladies, Elastic Skin Men, Etc., Are Made by Disease.

DR. JAMES C. MAGUIRE, of Washington, D. C., who is an eminent dermatologist, has reduced the study of dime museum freaks to an exact science. He knows how these monstrosities and abnormalities of nature are born and why. Here is the result of his interesting observations, as given recently in a lecture:

ELASTIC SKIN MAN.—There have been less than a half dozen of these strange people on exhibition. Here Hang is the best known. He could pull the skin from his chest up over his face. These cases are a form of dermatolysis, a rare deformity that is due to some defect in the attachment of the cuticle. It is a congenital affection, and the ability to move the skin is increased by cultivation. Other forms of the disease have the abnormal growth of skin hanging in folds and over-lapping layers. Such was the man with the lion's face, and frequently this affection gives the victim the face of a maul or hound.

ALBINOS.—These white-haired, pink-eyed, white-skinned people are the most common of the freak family. The albino is a sufferer from a partial or complete loss of pigment, or coloring matter, in the skin. The disease is of congenital origin; it is seldom met with in the white race. Not only is there less of pigment from the cutaneous covering, but the hairs and choroid coat of the eye are affected. White mice and white birds of this climate are examples of Albinism.

RUSSIAN DOG MAN.—He was better known as Jo Jo, and was an object of interest to all physicians making the study of diseases of the skin a specialty. He was a victim of the same disease that makes the bearded lady. In his case the lanugo or downy hair all over his body was sup-

planted by a heavy growth of such hair as should normally grow on the head. Hypertrichosis is a disease much commoner than is generally supposed, most frequently taking the shape of a growth on portions of the body that are covered with clothing.

THE LIVING SKELETON.—He is a sufferer from anæmia, and is only of interest when his bones begin to dry up and his skin to ossify, or, more properly speaking, to desiccate. The hide-bound condition of the skin is recognized as scleroderma, a chronic inflammatory disease characterized by a hardening and rigidity of the cuticle over areas of greater or less extent.

SHARK-SKIN BOY.—He is a sufferer from a pronounced case of ichthyosis, the skin being divided into diamond-shaped figures. Scales appear in abundance—white or dark green in color—and especially adherent in the centre.

THE BLUE MAN.—His condition is known as cyanosis, and is described in Foster's Dictionary as a bluish discoloration of the skin from "defective aeration of the blood, either temporary, as in asphyxia, or permanently, as in the subjects of some malformation of the heart." The blue is the injection of nitrate of silver.

THE FEATHERED BOY.—There never was but one on exhibition, and that was in 1830. His head was covered with a thatch of feathers. His was a very advanced case of an affection called in the medical works "phagocytosis." The feathers are long and slender, and by cultivation can be made to stand up prominently.

THE BEARDED LADY.—These females are afflicted with a deformity rather than a disease, which is known as hypertrichosis, or, bisulitis, which simply means a growth of hair abnormal in amount, or grows in places where lanugo or the soft, woolly hair present at birth are normally found.

THE TURTLE BOY.—He presents the rarest form of ichthyosis, known as ichthyosis congenita. Some authorities contend that it is a distinct affection, consisting in a perverted secretion of scrofulous and pre-natal origin. At birth the skin appears too tight for the body, is deeply fissured and hypertrophied and resembles plates of armor or the shell-back of a tortoise.

THE HUMAN UNICORN.—He is also known as the horned man. The excrescence shown on the head of a familiar case grew from his forehead and resembled an animal's horn in respect to shape and size, but was of a dark, gray, fish color, and rough and harsh to the touch. This condition, known as cornea cutaneum, may occur on any part of the body and be of any shape and number. They differ from similar appendages in cattle, from the fact that in these animals the horn grows only from osseous tissue. The horn on the human ultimately leads to what is called epithelioma, a form of cancer.

MISSING LINK.—These creatures are sometimes shown as the survivors of the Aztec race, or the wild Australian children. They are simply congenital idiots, and the pretence that they are representatives of an almost extinct race, or of the people of any land, is one of the museum manager's boldest frauds.

COLORED SWEAT.—The man who sits on a platform and who "sweats blood" or "sweats blue" may be afflicted with a disease known as chromidrosis; but as a rule he is feigning. The condition may be due to the growth of micro organisms, but it may be also caused by medicines taken internally.

THE HUMAN LEOPARD.—There have been many such on exhibition. They are afflicted with leucoderma, a word derived from the Greek and meaning "white skin." The term vitiligo—a blemish—is also applied to this deformity. It differs from Albinism in the fact that it is acquired and is not congenital. The loss of pigment occurs in patches more or less numerous that may run together until the entire body is white. The hair on the affected patches also turns white. The cause is scientifically described as "disturbance of innervation." Innervation means stimulation. The deformity is quite common among negroes and animals. The sacred white elephants of Siam are affected with leucoderma.

THE HUMAN BILLIARD BALL.—This young woman, well known to the museums, is absolutely devoid of hair. Her head is as smooth as a billiard ball, and there is an utter absence even of the lanugo hairs. The disease is known to dermatologists, and is the antithesis of hirsutism. There is no cure for it. It is congenital in its nature. Sometimes the condition is manifest from birth; oftener it develops in youth. It is nothing more than the baldness which attends old age.

THE ELEPHANT MAN.—The affliction of elephants arabis is frequently treated in the hospitals. It commonly affects the leg, and is known vulgarly as elephant leg, or Barbaodes leg. The disease is the result of disturbances of the circulation. The elephant man exhibited eight years ago was a victim of this hideous disease. A description of this monster in the British Medical Journal says of him: "The bony exostosis on his frontal bone, combined with a deformity on the superior maxilla, gave a trunklike appearance to the nose and upper lip, the profile of the face suggesting the profile of an elephant's head. The tissue is very loose, so that it can be raised from the deeper part in great folds. The cranial bones are deformed and overgrown, so that the circumference of the patient's head equals that of his waist. Bony exostoses spring from the frontal bone, the posterior part of the parietals and the occipital."

FORCUPINE OR HEDGEHOG MEN.—They suffer from the most severe manifestation of the disease which is called in that form leithyosis phystrix. The skin by reason of the ravages of the disease has become hypertrophied, or abnormally developed, and presents a dark, wrinkled, corrugated mass resembling the bark of a tree rather than fish scales. When this condition is accompanied by a thick, quilled growth of hair the freak is known as a porcupine man, or hedgehog. The skin will not bleed, and the wearer feels no sense of pain when it is cut or pricked.

ON TOP OF THE HIGHEST BUILDING IN THE WORLD.

I know just how it feels to stand on the remotest point of the highest building in the world. It is the great structure that

A WOMAN will be known as the St. Paul. As I looked down on New York from the edge of the coping I stood 300 feet above the city streets and 394 feet above the rock of Manhattan Island. It takes just one minute and a half for the elevator journey, and then comes the

SEES task that makes you realize you have nerves. Only three stories to the top from here, to be sure, but to ascend them with the wind blowing sixty miles an hour for a woman with skirts is very much like letting gas into a balloon and trying to keep it from being inflated.

From the twenty-fourth story a ladder runs to the roof. At

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the twenty-fifth story there is a resting place, supposed to be the first principles of a floor, but really composed of some beams and an occasional loose plank, not the surest footing in the world.

My journey wasn't ended yet, for I had determined to walk the coping which runs around the top of the roof, be-

FROM cause the view from there would be better than any place else. So I kept on, and presently stood on the coping, looking down and about at a sight it is worth any amount of trouble to see.

The wind's velocity had increased to seventy or eighty miles an hour. It was what the Summer resort keeper

25 calls a breezy outlook. Nothing could spoil that view, however. Away to the south Coney Island was as plainly visible as if you stood on the deck of one of the iron steamers as she makes for the pier. There was the big tower that the lightning loves, the

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piers, the elephant and all. It was all so plain it seemed to me as if I could hear the Midway "barkers." Beyond it was the ocean, miles and miles of it, looking as if it had never known a storm.

Away down below, looking west, was Broadway, and Ann street, and Park

ABOVE

row, black with little figures I knew were all sorts of people. They seemed to be moving in streams, like silhouettes, on a pavement background. The Broadway cars had the appearance of an endless chain, stretching away north and south.

Over beyond the city

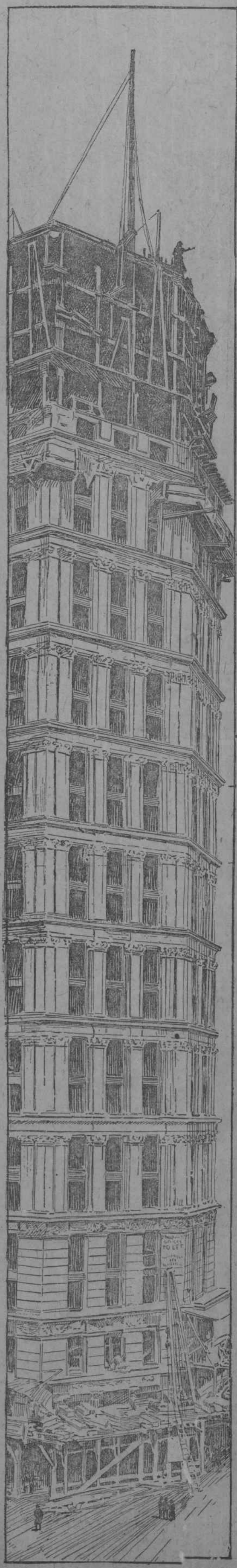
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was a silver belt, the North River, and still further on, past the wharves and roofs of Jersey City, were the Orange Mountains, the sun and shadow bringing their green tops into bold relief. Further south lay Staten Island, nestling close to the Jersey shore, and across the southern waters Sandy Hook and the Highlands

STREET.

loomed distinct and near. Looking north the city stretched away to the Harlem River and the Westchester hills.

All this I saw, and seeing, felt fully repaid for the danger I had risked to reach the point of view. Besides, I had the satisfaction of knowing I was the first, except those who were employed in the work of construction, to reach the top of the St. Paul Building.



**A CHECK FOR
\$12,278,750.**

Talk about a king's ransom. Here is a check for a sum big enough to ransom a regiment of kings. It is the biggest individual check that has ever been written. It almost astrophes a man in these hard times to read over slowly the words and figures on the face of that tiny scrap of paper. It is such a little paper. A long-

\$12278750\$

No. 4 **United States Mortgage Company**

\$12,278,750 NEW YORK *May 29th 1895*

THE CORN EXCHANGE BANK

PAY TO THE ORDER OF *Arthur J. Smith*

Twelve million two hundred and seventy eight thousand seven hundred and fifty Dollars

Arthur J. Smith

THE BIGGEST CHECK EVER DRAWN.

shoreman would tear off a much bigger piece than that to light his pipe with. And yet when it was drawn and signed and stamped it was worth over \$12,000,000. The story of this bit of paper, which the softest of Summer winds might blow away, which a man could carry inside the case of his watch, or which an energetic mouse could devour in thirty minutes, is an interesting extract from the record of giant financial transactions.

The paper was drawn on January 20, 1895, at the time when the Brooklyn Wharf & Warehouse Company was incorporated. The originator of that stupen-

dous enterprise was Thomas A. McIntyre, of the firm of McIntyre & Wardwell. It was a big day when the owners and representatives of the warehouses and river front properties of Brooklyn congregated in the office of the United States Mortgage Company to transfer their property to the new organization. Deeds were delivered and title papers handed over. The presidents of the new corporation, the United States Mortgage Company and the Title Guarantee & Trust Company were present to fulfill their respective duties. The deeds were examined and approved, the trust mortgage was delivered, the policy of the title insurance handed to the trustee, and the bonds and preferred stock of the newly incorporated company, or the certified checks, were de-

livered to the different sellers. It was 1:35 o'clock when the biggest transaction of its kind the world has ever known was closed. Consequently, a preliminary to the subscribers' payment to the mortgage bonds for subscriptions in advance of delivery. Those that were made through the United States Mortgage Company amounted to over \$12,000,000 and were paid in this one check. Checks of far greater value than this are received every day at the Sub-Treasury; but, being Governmental, they lack the peculiar interest of the warehouse check.

**BIGGEST CAT
IN THE WORLD.**

Just plain "Tom" is the unpretending name of probably the greatest domestic cat in the world. Edward Simmons, the fish and oyster man, of Boat No. 4 Fulton Market, is the proud possessor of "Tom." This giant of cats is thirty inches in length, from his head to the tip of his tail. He is a foot high, and weighed last Spring twenty-four

pounds. The recent hot weather has caused him to drop a few pounds of flesh, but has not impaired his health or happiness. Thomas is black and white, and is rather peculiarly marked. He has two complete rings of white around his tail, which makes him look like first cousin to a moccasin. Mr. Simmons picked up the cat two years ago while walking along South street. Thomas was but a stray kitten then, so that his pedigree has never been ascertained, and it is not yet known whether or not heredity has had anything to do with his enormous size.